

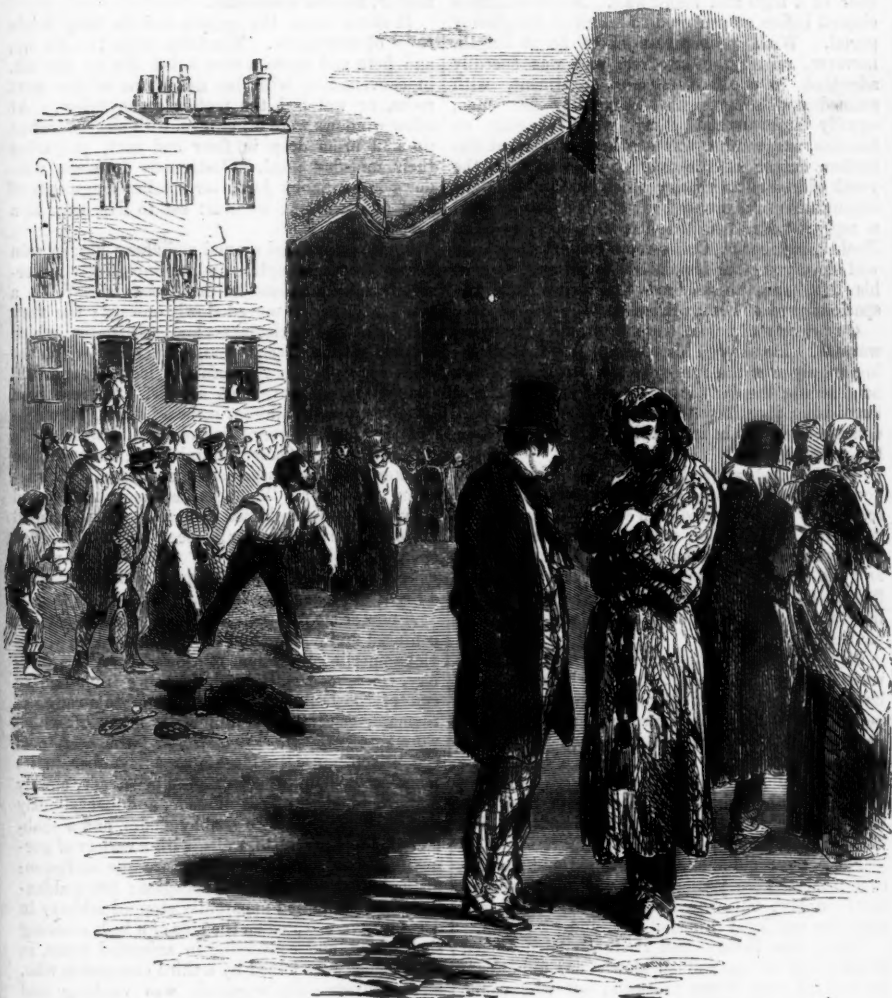
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A SCENE IN THE FLEET PRISON FIFTY YEARS AGO.

STRUGGLES IN LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

SEARCH FOR A FATHER IN THE OLD FLEET PRISON.

On a summer's morning, in the early part of the present century, a tall, slight, and well-dressed
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youth, not far in advances of boyhood, might have been seen hurriedly threading the throng of passengers which encumbered the pavement of Holborn. His boots and other garments bore marks of travel, in dust which owned no imme-

diate connection with the sweepings of London stones, and his air was jaded and anxious. More than once he stopped, as in uncertainty, and then quickened his speed, until, descending the steep declivity which cab-horses abominate, he plunged into the irregular assemblage of booths and stalls, known in those days as Fleet-market. Once more pausing, the youth addressed himself, with a burning face and a stammering tongue, to a man in the market; and, receiving the information he sought, pressed onward, and was lost in the crowd.

A few minutes later the young stranger was surveying, with a troubled gaze, the iron-studded door of a high and blank wall. Another minute elapsed before he ventured to knock at the gloomy portal. With a desperate effort he at length, however, raised the knocker, and was speedily admitted to a bare, strong apartment, with stained and slimy walls. Three or four men, equally stained and slimy, were lounging on benches, and another was seated at a desk at the farther corner of the room. To this man the youth addressed an inquiry which, after momentary consultation of a greasy book at his elbow, elicited a reply: "Mr. Leonard Marsden, chummed on Rooker, number 10, Coffee-room Gallery; anybody will show you;" and, pointing to an open door at his left hand, he ushered the visitor into the spacious yard of Fleet prison.

On prison and palace the sun shines with equal warmth. He showed his pleasant face that morning calmly over the iron-spiked walls of the Fleet, brightening the dark, smoke-grimed building, and burnishing its dingy windows. It was a prison, doubtless; but it had warmth and light there, in the prison yard.

"Not so bad, after all," thought the bewildered youth to himself, as he cast his eyes around on the scene into which he had been suddenly introduced; "call it a big boarding-school for men, and it may be bearable; but not for *him*," he silently added, and his eyes began to fill; "not for him. Dear father, to think that you should be deprived of liberty, and have men like these for companions!"

Men like these! the prison yard was well filled with them—men in shirt sleeves which had once been white; men in faded dressing gowns and slippers which had once been gorgeous; men in shabby genteel costume which had once been fashionable and new and glossy, but that was a long while ago; men in beards of a week's rugged growth, and hands which had once been clean, now half thrust into pockets to conceal the deformity of dirt. The sun was shining on them all.

There were old men, grey-headed and watery-eyed: there were young men, not long since infants, in law, but who had suddenly strided into maturity and legal responsibility, and—a prison.

"Men like these!" and Basil Marsden looked around him as he walked slowly on, unnoticed. It wanted two hours to noon; but why count hours in prison? Here a group of men was clustered, lazily reclining on benches, smoking and quaffing draughts of strong beer from battered pewter. There, with all the ardour of schoolboys, another party was playing at ball against the high walls of the prison yard, as though intent on beaking down with tennis bullets the barrier

between it and liberty; while others, looking on, were betting on the issue of the game. The players were bathed in perspiration; the spectators shouted applause at every successful hit; and the sun shone on them all.

Elsewhere, and apart from the common vulgar, beneath the walls of the grim building, walked arm-in-arm, in twos and threes, the men in morning gowns and slippers, redolent still of drawing-room perfumes. These were among the aristocracy of the Fleet; and they looked with suitable scorn on their brethren in adversity, the shopocracy, whom perhaps they had assisted to ruin; but no matter, the sun shone still.

It shone upon the prison and its long triple rows of casements. Windows were thrown up, and here and there a man lolled idly on the sill, in conversation with his neighbour of the next room, or watched the motley scene below. At other windows were other men, with sleeves tucked up and arms deep in flour and suet, preparing their mid-day meal. Contiguous to some windows hung flabby joints or smaller fragments of beef and mutton: we must eat to live, even in a prison.

The youth looked around and above him in vain for the face he sought; and he imperfectly understood the directions he had received. With a sickened heart he moved slowly onward; the very hilarity and recklessness and selfishness which marked almost every countenance on which he fixed his eyes were painful: a look of sorrowful concern would have been a relief. "These men have wives and children, some of them," thought Basil: "do they ever think of *them*, I wonder?"

"Coffee-room Gallery, number 10; chummed on Rooker:" the words had some meaning, Basil supposed; but of all the faces he encountered—and they were to be reckoned by scores—there seemed not one to invite his confidence; so he proceeded silently on his search. He reached the prison door at last; it was widely open, and he ascended a flight of stone steps and entered.

A new scene presented itself, which still further confused and confounded all Basil Marsden's previous puerile conceptions of a prison. A long gallery, tolerably well lighted, reaching from end to end of the building, gave entrance to a range of rooms, consecutively numbered, many of which were thrown open, and disclosed "the secrets of the prison-house." Here was a chamber in its morning dishabille; two stump bedsteads, closely jammed together; beds unmade, and marvellously dirty; floor ditto; two shabby chairs, and a shabbier table ditto; ditto, walls, with a variety of garments hung around them in picturesque confusion; ditto, ditto. The room was occupied; two sodden-faced men, who had apparently stopped midway in dressing, were seated on the side of a bed, smoking short pipes, and conversing in animated tones, in which they were joined by a third companion who, more industriously engaged, was washing and scraping a bowl of potatoes at the table. If any comparison could be drawn, where all was filthy, and sickening with the fumes of stale tobacco, superadded to those of a close, overcrowded room which served for a bedroom, kitchen, scullery, and parlour—this man-cook was the dirtiest article in the whole lot. So thought Basil, as he turned

away, ineffably disgusted with the momentary glance he took in passing.

Another open door; and Basil, whose curiosity, in spite of his heavy heart, was languidly raised, beheld a striking contrast to anything he had yet witnessed. The room was carpeted, and scrupulously clean: the window was open, and within side were pots of flowers in bloom, to freshen the atmosphere and enliven the scene. A thin, pale man, in gentlemanly garb, was watering and trimming them as the youth passed by. There were a bed, and a table and chairs; but there were neatness and order, instead of filth and confusion; while the walls of the apartment, probably not long since washed and coloured, were adorned with pictures in frames, and a set of well-filled bookshelves.

The aspect was inviting, and Basil timidly tapped at the open door, and learned, in answer to his inquiry, that he must ascend to the gallery above to find the room he sought. The gentleman then abruptly closed his door, as though vexed at the intrusion; and Basil Marsden hastened briskly on.

He was in a prison, no doubt; but not the prison he had pictured to himself. Here was a prison with an open door: here were prisoners apparently without restraint, walking in and walking out at their pleasure. Where was the jailor? where were the turnkeys? Here was he, a stranger and an intruder, wandering at his will, and no one roughly to take him to task for his temerity. He had been let in easily enough; would they let him out? It did not matter; his father was there, if he could but be found.

A prison! why, it seemed like a market on a small scale. Here a butcher's shop, there a chandler's, there a greengrocer's, and there a baker's; with customers going in and coming out; some women, some men; but the latter predominated. Men were lounging in the gallery, as others were lounging in the yard; and the sun shone cheerily in.

Up the broad stone stairs to a purer atmosphere and a lighter gallery above. Basil's heart beat heavily and fast, and he drew his breath thickly, as he sought the number of his father's room. It was soon found. A gentle, hesitating knock; a moment's pause; a single glance as the door opened; and the boy's hand was clasped in his father's.

"Father, dear father!" and the pent-up feelings broke forth in hysterical sobs.

"Basil, my dear boy, I did not expect to see you here."

CHAPTER II.

SNARES FOR THE CONFIDING AND UNWARY.

WITH three hundred pounds a year in government securities, and the reputation of as many hundreds more, with a pretty country house, a careful housekeeper (for Mr. Marsden was a widower), an only son, and two daughters—he being also an easy-tempered gentleman, of middle age, domestic in his habits, simple and inexpensive in his tastes, and one who looked upon debt as one of the cardinal vices, and prompt payment as one of the cardinal virtues—what business had Mr. Leonard Marsden in a prison for debtors?

To explain this, we must turn over a few pages in his past history.

Ten years before the date at which our story commences, Mr. Marsden wound up his affairs and retired from business. Two circumstances contributed to this event. The first was the death of his wife. The second was the receipt of a legacy which doubled the amount of his capital.

The loss of his wife was the first serious trouble in domestic life that Mr. Marsden had ever experienced; and the subsequent accession to his property, instead of softening, added bitterness to his grief. "Had *she* lived," he sighed, "the money would have added to our enjoyments, and enabled us to put into execution the plans we have often formed for a quiet and happy repose from the cares of business; but these day dreams are over!" With an aching heart the widower went through the formalities which put him into possession of his fortune; and then, by plunging with feverish eagerness into the full tide of commerce, he attempted to drown the recollection of his sorrows. But it would not do; business, which in his heart Mr. Marsden had always disliked, was found to be unbearably irksome; and, in a fit of desperation, he advertised his concern, which was a profitable one; met with a purchaser; bought a small house a few miles from London, on one of the western roads; removed to it with his children and his servants; and forsook business for ever.

Mr. Marsden had no fixed plans for the future; no intentions, except that of passing the remainder of his life in melancholy contemplation of the happiness which had escaped his grasp, and the mournful breach which death had caused; and, for a time, he was as morbidly miserable as he expected and almost—strange to say!—desired to be. To have indulged in a smile, or to have taken ordinary interest in anything beneath the sun, would have been treason against the memory of departed joys.

But let no man say, "I will never be comforted." By degrees Mr. Leonard Marsden admitted the consolations of religion, reason, and time, and remembered that he still had duties to discharge in life. His infant children, whom he had hitherto left to the tender mercies of hirelings, became his companions; and the cultivation of his garden afforded sufficient employment for time not occupied in their society, or in the seclusion of his reading-room. By his richer neighbours, Mr. Marsden was accounted of singularly secluded and hermit-like habits, for he entered very little into society: by the poor around him he was admired for his liberality and kindness—not always perhaps wisely directed; for Mr. Marsden did not like the trouble involved in judicious and discriminating benevolence.

Between Mr. Marsden and his only son a confidence and affection sprung up, which was very pleasant to behold. The father was indulgent, and the boy was docile. They were happy companions; and when, in process of time, Basil left home for school, it was a new trial of no small magnitude to Mr. Marsden.

Several years, then, passed away; and except that Mr. Leonard Marsden saw fit to place his daughters at a boarding-school, entitled in the prospectus, "an establishment for young ladies;"

that he looked forward with some degree of anxiety to Basil's entrance upon the business of life, and began to wonder what he should make of him; and that he himself became more than ever averse to society—no changes occurred which it is needful for us to record, until an event took place which was destined to turn the calm stream of existence into a turbulent current.

One morning the seclusion of Willow Lodge—for so had Mr. Marsden designated his hermitage—was broken in upon by a visitor, who, after first astonishing the quiet household by a rapid and elongated play on the brass knocker, and then sending in his card to the annoyance of Mr. Marsden, was ushered into the library of the reclusive.

"Mr. Lightfoot," said that gentleman, hesitatingly, and advancing a step towards his visitor; "not surely the Arthur Lightfoot—"

"The same, sir," exclaimed the visitor briskly, and taking the half-extended hand; "the very Arthur Lightfoot whom you formerly knew as town traveller for Twigg and Peachblossom. Times have changed with us both since then, Mr. Marsden."

"Favourably with you, I trust," said Mr. Marsden; "but pray be seated." He rubbed his knuckles as he spoke, for Mr. Lightfoot's hand had the grasp of a vice, and he wore a thick knobby ring, which left a painful impression behind it. It was Mr. Lightfoot's way of shaking hands; and the ring was the one ornament in his costume, all else being elaborately plain and faultlessly neat. Probably the ring was intended to convey an idea of high respectability; it was no flashy, pinchbeck affair, but a solid, weighty, and golden argument.

"Favourably! well, sir, I need not complain," said the visitor, jerking himself into a chair; "managed to keep the ball moving; it wouldn't do for me to be idle, you know. A happy man you are, Mr. Marsden."

Leonard sighed. "I have reason to be thankful," he said softly.

"Thankful! exactly so. A pretty box this; nice and snug, and all that. Nothing to do but enjoy one's self: ride, drive, shoot; no bother of pounds, shillings and pence. On my word, Marsden, I envy you."

"You overrate my sources of amusement," said Mr. Marsden, drily: "I neither ride, drive, nor shoot."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed the visitor; "well, I thought you had a taste that way. For my own part, I am like a horse in a mill; business, sir, business: I shall die in harness, I suppose; though I don't know about that. I have my dreams, sometimes, of a quiet country life, a few hundreds a year, and all that sort of thing. Very pretty, isn't it?"

Mr. Marsden acquiesced, but presumed that Mr. Lightfoot, not being yet "out of harness," was travelling on business for the old firm, perhaps?

"Quite in a different line, my dear sir," responded Mr. Lightfoot, with a bland smile. "A long stride from that, sir, I may venture to say, or my *otium cum dignitate* would be a long way off. You see the papers, of course, Mr. Marsden?"

"Very rarely indeed," replied the recluse; "I

take but little interest in what goes on in the world."

"You surprise me, my dear sir; you have not been in town lately, perhaps."

Mr. Marsden confessed that he had not. His journeys to London were few and far between, he said.

"Very good, sir, very: 'like angel visits, few and far between,'" said the brisk visitor, smiling again; "but if you would permit me to say it, you *should* know a little of what is going on in the great world. These are stirring times, Mr. Marsden; and men of capital and influence ought to be wide awake to the good of the community, and to their own interests as well; they ought indeed, dear sir."

Mr. Marsden modestly replied that, so far as the remark was intended to apply to himself, Mr. Lightfoot had probably overrated his wealth; and as to influence—

"Influence, my dear sir; every man has influence," continued Mr. Lightfoot, "which, if wisely exerted, would be a blessing to society at large. No man knows, sir, the amount of influence he has, till he begins to exert it. And as to wealth, whether it is little or much, these are not the times to let capital lie idle, Mr. Marsden, when a judicious investment would—I won't say double a man's income, for that would be saying a great deal too little—I should rather say, multiply it tenfold."

"But if a man—myself, for instance, Mr. Lightfoot—should fancy that he has enough for all his wants, and prefers a quiet life to a bustling one?"

"Why, as to having enough, sir, I should like to see the man who thinks he has enough, when he has the chance of a little more—eh, my dear sir?" and Mr. Lightfoot laughed merrily. "And the beauty of it is, dear sir, that by following the plan I would recommend, a quiet gentleman like yourself, Mr. Marsden, may sit all day in his drawing-room, if he has a mind to it, and be richer at night than he was in the morning, by scores or hundreds of pounds, leaving it to fellows like me, Mr. Marsden, who are fond of elbowing our way in a crowd, to work the machinery. You understand me?"

Mr. Marsden was not certain that he did; but he did not say so.

"The fact is, my dear sir," continued the visitor, "the old humdrum way of conducting business is pretty well exploded. It was all very well; but it has had its day, and the exigencies of the times call for another sort of system. 'Knowledge is power,' sir, and 'union is strength.' With science to guide us, Mr. Marsden, and combined force to follow up its discoveries, we are entering on a new era, and shall soon see most astounding results."

"I am wretchedly ignorant of these matters," said the host, wearily; "I have been out of the world so long—"

"Exactly so, my dear sir," said the other, quickly;—"by the way, you have a family, I think?"

This was a subject on which the recluse would talk; and, glad to escape the infliction of a lecture on the results of machinery, with which he seemed threatened, his countenance brightened, and he launched out in eulogiums on his motherless children.

"You make me envy you, my dear sir," said Mr. Lightfoot, who had listened with very commendable patience to his old friend's rather prolix account of the varied accomplishments of his boy and girls, the hopes and comforts of his life;—"yes, envy you, Mr. Marsden; we old bachelors ought to banish ourselves from society if we would not be heartbroken by witnessing happiness which we cannot share; but excuse me, my good fellow"—Mr. Lightfoot knew his ground: he could venture from "dear sir," to "good fellow"—"now you are positively, if you will allow me to say so, positively inflicting a deep and lasting injury on your children; you are indeed."

"In what way, Mr. Lightfoot?" asked the father, gravely.

"Why, look now, my dear sir; you don't see it, of course; but I think I can make it plain to you. It is all very well at present; but a year or two hence, Mr. Marsden, when your girls have left school, and your son is beginning to feel his legs, where will you be then, sir? The young ladies will want society, the young gentleman will be saying to himself, 'I am only at the foot of the ladder—I must get up a few rounds;' and then where will you be, Mr. Marsden?"

"Well, sir?"

"It isn't for me, of course, to dictate to you, my dear sir; but it strikes me very forcibly that you will be wishing then that you hadn't shut yourself up so much in a corner of the world——"

"A very snug corner, is it not, Mr. Lightfoot?" asked Mr. Marsden, rather impatiently; "we cannot be in two places at once, you know."

"Very true," replied the visitor, confidently; "but to be shut up in a corner all one's life, isn't a thing that young people look forward to. They will want to see a little of the world, my good friend, and to taste a few of the sugar plums—you understand me? And then, a few years hence, you will want to be marrying your daughters, and settling them comfortably in life; and Mr. Basil, he will be for pushing a-head: all quite natural and right; but then it will come to pounds, shillings and pence, and where are they to come from?"

"We must do the best we can, sir, as circumstances arise," said Mr. Marsden. "'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof,' you know."

"Ah, but, my dear sir, if we can prevent the evil of to-morrow by wise precautions to-day. If, for instance, you could by a trifling outlay, a judicious investment—mind, I say a *judicious* investment—and with no expenditure of trouble at all, secure a few thousands extra, just to portion off your daughters, and start your son fairly—fairly, sir; and add to your income as well, in the mean time. These things are worth thinking about, my good friend."

"And you wish to show me how to do it," rejoined Mr. Marsden, rather incredulously.

"Exactly so, my dear sir. The fact is, I am out on a little business excursion, and by the merest chance, I assure you, I heard of your whereabouts. I couldn't pass without calling; and being here, why shouldn't I give an old acquaintance the chance, rather than throw it away upon strangers? I'll explain it all in a few minutes, Mr. Marsden."

CHAPTER III.

MAKING HASTE TO BE RICH, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

If the philosopher of Laputa, who laboured night and day and expended a lifetime of thought to mature a scheme for the extraction of sunbeams from cucumbers, had lived and breathed in the days of which we write, he would have originated a joint-stock company, and, being wise in his generation, might have made a fortune by his notable project; or, not being thus wise, but only a philosopher, he would have laid the foundation of a fortune for those who were.

Mr. Lightfoot was not a philosopher: he was not even a genius; but, what was more to the purpose—to his purpose—he was, what he himself was pleased to denominate, a go-a-head man. He had not much wit in his composition, nor too much honesty; yet, as times went, he was indifferently honest. That is to say, he would not have forged a bill, nor robbed a bank; nor would he have compassed by foul means—or what he considered foul means—what he might fail in achieving by fair, or means which he considered fair. He had been, as we have observed, a commercial traveller—Messieurs Twigg and Peachblossom's town traveller—and had given great satisfaction to those gentlemen. A town traveller he might have remained; he might even, in process of time, have aspired to a twentieth or a fortieth share in the firm of Twigg and Peachblossom, if another opportunity had not been thrown in his way of turning to account his talents.

Joint-stock companies were springing up like mushrooms. Men who had too much money, and men who hadn't enough; men who had none at all, and men who were deeply involved, were seized with one common infatuation. A new way was found out of making money, and of paying old debts. There was nothing too wild and extravagant to be started, so that the originator had brass enough; *that* was essential—to carry on the project with a bold face. Forthwith a joint-stock company was formed, prospectuses were issued; shares were advertised; a provisional committee was formed; directors were nominated; and gulls were caught.

Mr. Lightfoot's private opinion of the particular company—which, for sufficient reasons, we do not see fit to designate, except by its initials, the Joint-stock D. B. Mining Company, to wit—we say that Mr. Lightfoot's private opinion of the company of which he had become secretary and resident director might be that it was a humbug. But what then? It was only his private opinion; and very possibly he was mistaken. As far as he was concerned, all was fair and above-board. "Here is the object we have in view, sir; judge for yourself: here is the prospectus; read, my dear sir, read: here is the list of directors, good men and true, warm men, sir, who know what is what; here is the guaranteed capital (on paper); there are the shares, sir, at a premium already, and mounting rapidly upward. I say nothing; there's no need for me to puff off *my* wares; no occasion in the world for the Joint-stock D. B. Mining Company to go a begging for shareholders. We don't promise impossibilities, sir; we come to facts and figures—figures of arithmetic, sir, not figures

of speech; and there it is in black and white, sir, as plain as A, B, C."

Mr. Leonard Marsden listened with an air of helpless bewilderment as his visitor thus fluently ran on. "I must take your word for it, Lightfoot," he said at length, when that gentleman came to a pause and sipped his wine; for the host had hospitably set lunch before him: "I dare say it is all plain enough; but I am so wretchedly out of my element now, in business affairs, and so averse to speculation——"

"Speculation, my dear sir! you surprise me."

We need not farther detail the conversation: an hour later, the secretary and resident director was on his road; and Mr. Leonard Marsden was a shareholder in the Joint-stock D. B. Mining Company.

The slightest possible twinge of conscience mingled with the feeling of self-gratulation which accompanied Mr. Lightfoot as he drove onward. He dismissed it with an indignant—"Pshaw!"

Several months passed away, and, except that he had been troubled with some few "calls" for instalments of his purchased shares, Mr. Marsden had almost forgotten his engagements with the Joint-stock D. B. Mining Company. He had ventured, as he supposed, only a few hundred pounds, which he could very well spare. He was not very sanguine as to the result of his venture, but it might possibly turn to his advantage; Mr. Lightfoot had assured him it would; and, if it did, so much the better.

Meanwhile, the D. B. Company was making some noise in the world—progressing gloriously, said Mr. Lightfoot. So many thousands were expended on business premises; so many on salaries, including that of the secretary and resident director, of course; so many on advertisements. Shares were at a premium, and they were rising in the market, higher and higher. Glorious! They were to be had neither for love nor money. More glorious still!

Mr. Leonard Marsden was seated at his solitary breakfast table—solitary, for Basil was visiting an old school-fellow fifty miles away, and the sisters were at school, when his solicitor was announced.

Mr. Marsden had a horror of law and lawyers; but, having found that he could not get through the world without their assistance, he had resigned himself to his inevitable necessity, and chosen for his solicitor a gentleman who lived in the neighbourhood of Lincoln's Inn, and whose principal business, as far as Mr. Marsden was concerned, was to manage his investments and receive and transmit his dividends.

"This is an unexpected"—pleasure, Mr. Marsden would have said if he could—"an unexpected visit, Mr. Thornburn," he said, rising and handing his visitor a chair.

"Um! I suppose so; you have a cup of coffee left, I hope, and a slice of ham; 'tis ill talking," you know, 'between a full man and a fasting; and I have had but a light breakfast."

"You have been dabbling, I find, in these vile companies, Mr. Marsden," said the lawyer abruptly, after he had hastily swallowed a few mouthfuls.

"Only in one, my dear sir," replied the victim, apologetically and feebly; "and that only to the extent of a few shares. I didn't think it worth while to trouble you in such a trifling business; and so——"

"And so, a pretty kettle of fish you have made of it, my good friend."

"Mr. Thornburn, what do you mean? The D. B. Mining Company——"

"The Joint-stock D. B. Mining Company—that is exactly what I do mean, Mr. Marsden. Do you know, my good sir, that you have been most egregiously gulled?"

"Gulled, sir! why, pray Mr. Thornburn, do explain yourself. The last advice I had was that shares were at I don't know how much premium."

"And my advice is, my dear sir, that the whole concern is a most rascally affair, from beginning to end, and that it is smashed to atoms."

Mr. Marsden changed colour; but he soon recovered himself. "Then my poor five hundred pounds are gone," he observed, with composure; "so that moan is soon moaned. It will scarcely spoil my appetite for dinner."

The solicitor looked at his client with a broad stare of astonishment, not unmingled with both admiration and pity. "I wish that were all, Mr. Marsden," said he; "but I am sorry to tell you that you have just made yourself liable for every farthing of the precious company's debts, and they are to the tune of fifty thousand pounds, more or less."

Mr. Marsden started with extreme astonishment; but he rallied. "I was not aware of that, Mr. Thornburn; but I alone am not responsible, of course; there are the directors——"

"The directors have backed out in time, my good friend; they bolstered up the concern in the share market as long as it was safe for them; and then it was '*Sauve qui peut*,' and bad luck to the hindmost. Your friend Lightfoot writes himself down as a salaried servant of the company; not a single share does he hold; and, in fact—and that brought me down here this morning—you are just ruined, plack and bawbee, as they say in the north. The only comfort is, that you are ruined in company."

"But how, my dear sir?" asked the victim, in great perturbation; "I really don't understand it; I am so wretchedly ignorant of these matters——"

"To be sure you are, my good sir; and the greater reason why you should have kept your fingers in your own pie. If the thing were less serious than it is, I should rate you soundly for your folly. But that won't do now."

"What will do, Mr. Thornburn?"

"Why, you must put yourself into my hands, if you can trust me; and I must try and get you out of the mess as well as I can. If the worst comes to the worst, we must get you through the court in the best way we are able."

"The court! Mr. Thornburn. What court?"

"The court of insolvency," said the lawyer, coolly.

The worst *did* come to the worst: and thus, by a short cut, we bring back our readers to the Fleet prison.

A VISIT TO THE MANSION OF MADAME DE SEVIGNE.

FOR a person fond of historical associations, and who loves to linger amidst the monuments of days gone by, there is perhaps no greater treat than an excursion to that part of Paris called le Marais. We will fancy our stranger directing his steps towards the vast boulevards, now almost deserted, of the faubourg Saint Antoine. Following the Rue des Minimes, he passes before the monastery of the Capuchin friars, who called themselves *minimi*—the very small, the smallest of all—thus, perhaps, like Antisthenes of old, showing their pride under the tattered folds of their sackcloth. This monastery, formerly so famous for the pomp of its religious ceremonies, a place of resort for courtiers and poets, warriors and statesmen, has been appropriated to the use of less refined occupants; the barracks of the municipal guard now cover the spot where Madame de Sévigné used to pray for her daughter. The hand of decay is unmistakably evident there; but turn the corner of the street, and you will be involuntarily arrested by the delightful sculptures of Jean Goujon, the Huguenot artist, who, like many great men belonging to the sixteenth century, fell a victim under the cruel bigotry of Catherine de Medici. The gateway is nobly arched, and surmounted by a slight female figure, graceful, fairy-like, supported by one foot, and that foot resting on a pretty mask. Beneath the mask, which was, I suppose, part of the arms of the Carnavalet family, is an escutcheon mutilated by the hammer, where, doubtless, might have been seen the sable and argent quarters of the Sévigné, together with the four crosses of the Rabutins. Lions, trophies, and Roman bucklers extend in long bas-reliefs on each side of the door. There is something so quiet, so placid in the countenances of the inhabitants of the Marais, that they seem to belong to another age.

I had one day ventured upon the artistic journey I am now recommending, and, passing through one of the entrances to the hôtel Carnavalet, I found myself in the presence of an old-fashioned individual, the *concierge* or lodge-keeper for the time being. Everything heightened the illusion which seemed to surround me: the house, now changed into a school, "authorised," as the bill professes, "by government," was deserted; the vacations had just begun; master, scholars, servants, all were absent; the deepest quiet reigned throughout the vast edifice, and the white muslin curtains of the windows alone announced that it was inhabited. For a moment I felt inclined to inquire of the ancient figure who opened the door, whether madame la marquise de Sévigné was at home? or at Grignan? or at Bourbilly? But suddenly my dreams vanished at the voice of a wretched-looking usher, sitting in a corner of the yard and reading "Quintus Curtius" aloud. It was, as I remember distinctly, from the very same author that my holiday tasks were generally taken, and the reminiscences of Latin exercises rushing upon me, substituted, for the emotions I was seeking, impressions of a totally different character. I certainly did not expect to find my old enemy, "Quintus Curtius," established within madame de Sévigné's hôtel. The court is very fine, and the house, ornamented

on the outside by the graceful chisel of Jean Goujon, has unfortunately been sacrificed to the improving propensities of the artistes of the *grand siècle*. Imagine, behind the entrance gate, an elegant frontage surmounted by a terrace. Well, it is on this light but symmetrical construction that self-styled architects have built a suite of attics ornamented (P) with clumsy allegorical figures of the months and the signs of the zodiac.

Within, all has disappeared—gilding, panels, frescoes, arabesques. I walked up a large staircase, shorn of the beautiful iron railings which formerly decorated it; I found myself in the state apartments, now turned into dormitories, and completely white-washed; it was quite impossible to determine which was the drawing-room, the dining-room, or the library; and I had just made up my mind to leave, really disappointed with my visit, when the obliging pedagogue, who had forsaken his "Quintus Curtius" to show me over the place, said carelessly: "There is another small cabinet on this side; would you like to see it?" I followed my guide, and judge of my surprise and delight at discovering a snug boudoir still looking as if it had been arranged by madame de Sévigné herself! The room is, as I have hinted, small and square; two handsome windows open on a garden; and the heavy iron balconies, beautifully wrought, are charged with ornaments which tell their own date. A few pictures by Mignard hang from the panels; and as I placed myself in front of the old white marble chimney-piece, I fancied that time had taken a retrograde step towards the brilliant age of Louis XIV.

The hôtel Carnavalet, although one of the most admirable specimens of architecture in Paris, has never been finished. It was built piece-meal, so to say, and an attentive eye can trace the chronology of the various parts. One of the wings originated with a legacy left to madame de Sévigné by the abbé de Coulanges; the fortune of the bishop of Châlons had nearly completed the other; but what with the marriage portion of her daughter, madame de Grignan, and the dissipations of the young baron, her son, madame de Sévigné was obliged to draw in, and the façade remained in a fragmentary condition.

As I walked up and down the boudoir of the hôtel Carnavalet, my imagination easily supplied what the living reality did not present. Easy chairs, splendid candelabra, tapestries, damask and velvet—all the luxury and elegance of the time—was conjured up, and the apartments gradually filled with company. I could hear the amusing chit-chat of the duchesse du Lude, the *jeu d'esprit* of madame de Coulanges, the sententious conversation of the grave and polished duke de la Rochefoucauld. Suddenly the folding doors are thrown open, the cardinal de Retz enters, arm-in-arm with chancellor Séguier (or "Pierrot," as he was facetiously called). These two personages find some difficulty in making way through the crowd of visitors; but at last they arrive at the spot where the mistress of the mansion, surrounded by a few more intimate friends, recognises them with a gracious bow. What a noise in the court-yard! what life! what torches! what carriages! . . . "Room for monsieur le prince de Condé! . . . Room for monsieur le vicomte de

Turenne! . . . Room for monsieur de Marseille!" The factotum Corbinelli receives every one at the door, and madame la marquise laughs, and chats, and collects all the current news to put in the next letter to her daughter.

There is much pleasure to be drawn from a consideration of the past, such as I was thus endeavouring to realise; but this pleasure is accompanied by feelings of a more serious character. For, read attentively the life of madame de Sévigné, study her letters, enter fully into the spirit which seems to have presided over her career on earth, and then tell us honestly whether many a page in that history might not have been more profitably left out. The lady of fashion opens her heart unreservedly to us; but in doing so she is writing the annals of vanity and inconsistency. A great deal has been said of madame de Sévigné's warm-heartedness; we should not forget, on the other hand, what she said of the Protestants, and how she rejoiced when the half-starved Breton peasants were sent to the gallows for having remonstrated against the tyranny of their governor. She did not see the wickedness of associating with Ninon de l'Enclos; the circle of her friends comprised, including de Retz, Gourville, Fouquet and Péliisson, some of the most notorious profligates the world has ever known. We must, after all, apply the standard of the gospel to the subjects or individuals we are led to consider, and if the result should be to throw down from its pedestal one of the effigies which the admiration of posterity has placed in the temple of fame, still there is no room for hesitation. Besides —

I might have thus gone on moralising much longer, if I had not suddenly felt some one pulling me by the sleeve. It was the good pedagogue, who, tired of his self-imposed duties as a cicerone, felt anxious to return to "Quintus Curtius."—That fatal "Quintus Curtius!"

GOLOWIN'S BANISHMENT TO SIBERIA.

FROM THE GERMAN.

CHAPTER I.

It was a misfortune for Russia that Peter the Great died without leaving an heir to his throne. Catharine, his widow, undertook the regency, and carried it on with vigour; but after two years she was snatched away by death, at the early age of thirty-eight.

Disorders of every kind were the consequence of this sudden change on the throne. The new government was not for some time properly settled; the old parties struggled against all reformatory innovations. Discontent prevailed among nobles and people. Deeds of violence were committed, and therefore nothing was improved. At last the excitement of the Russian people burst forth. A rebel, named Pugatschew, unfurled the standard of revolt in the south, proclaimed himself emperor Peter III, deluding the credulous, and gaining the rapacious hordes, by the most extravagant promises. At first he was only followed by a contemptible band of robbers, but they soon increased to a multitude, and finally to an army. Some cunning adherents increased the confidence of the masses; and

terror, which was produced by their outrages, checked the spirit of opposition. The commotion spread through the large province of Orenburg, through Kasan, and across the Siberian boundary, while fear and danger extended even to Moscow.

After a hard and bloody conflict Pugatschew was defeated, and finally lost his life by the hand of the executioner at Moscow. Numerous arrests now took place; and in the first moment of excitement many were beheaded who were either entirely innocent, or deserved only a slight punishment. Russian laws are notoriously severe: political criminals are more especially punished. They are transported to Siberia, where they must remain in an appointed district, and are then left to their fate. We are about to relate the history of one such exile.

In a middling-sized, well-built house in Moscow dwelt Feodor Golowin, a merchant. It was rather a solitary locality; though the streets were near, they were inhabited by few tradesmen, and when night descended, deep silence spread around it. Golowin had been married eight years. His wife was warmly attached to him, and he had four children. His business and his family divided his time. His wife's brother, Yermanoff, was almost the only guest who visited his house, except a young man named Romanow, a friend of Yermanoff, who was engaged in a situation in Moscow. When assembled in his comfortable room, they talked of various matters, but avoided everything criminal; the prudent master would not allow, nor his friends attempt, such topics; so that when nearly everybody in Moscow was apprehensive of arrest and banishment, Golowin felt at ease and breathed freely. His conscience was clear; no fear disturbed him. In this peaceful state of mind he did not observe some spies who one evening watched his house, and minutely noticed all who went in and out therefrom. Yermanoff and Romanow left about midnight; and seeing that they were followed to their dwellings, they had the precaution to warn the brother-in-law and friend, on the following morning, of the ill designs of a malicious informer. Alas! it was then too late.

An hour after midnight came a loud knock at Golowin's door. The terrified master quickly slipped on his fur coat, fearing it was an alarm of fire, threw open the window and asked, "What's the matter?"

"Open, in the name of the empress," cried a rough voice. Golowin glanced at a group of armed men, who stood below, and hastened down in dismay to hear the command. The door is opened. Soldiers and police produce dark lanterns from under their coats, press in, seize Golowin, and stare in his face, with the question, "Who are you?"

"My name is Golowin; I am a merchant; and this is my house," said the terrified man.

"Well, you must go with us; it is the imperial command," replied the man with the rough voice.

"Why?" asked Golowin, full of horror.

"I know not," was the answer; and at the same time they began to drag away the unfortunate man. "Oh, let me dress myself first," cried Golowin, almost fainting with fear and



THE MIDNIGHT ARREST.

haste. The police now glanced at his person, and one of them said, "May we venture to do so?"

The leader hesitated, but at last said in a low voice: "We were commanded to take him to the commissioner, but nothing was said about his dress. What will you give us if we let you dress yourself?" he then said aloud, turning to Golowin, who first offered ten, then twenty, and lastly one hundred roubles. For this sum he obtained sufficient time to put on the necessary clothing, and at the same time to exchange some signs with his despairing wife, to whom he durst not speak. They then dragged him away without further formalities, plundered his house of what they could carry off in their haste, and proceeded to the police station.

Here he was at once examined. When they were satisfied that he was "the right man," he

was desired to mount a sledge waiting in the court, to which a Cossack on horseback was already attached. Golowin, with the courage of innocence, inquired the reason of his arrest. They said, "We know not," and desired him to go. He threatened to complain to the empress; on which the officer beckoned to the police standing by Golowin, who quietly took their knouts (or many-thonged whips) from their girdles, and struck Golowin with them until he obeyed: the Cossack also held a pistol before his eyes, showed him its muzzle, and with these significant omens left our unhappy friend to his own thoughts and feelings. Of what kind these were it is easy to conjecture.

Soon after this, a second prisoner was brought in, and compelled in like manner to mount the sledge; only in his case the knout was not used, as he did not offer the least resistance. Two

Cossacks next tied each of their hands together, bound them fast to the seat, and after searching the prisoners from head to foot most minutely, and finding no arms of any kind, (and only a heavy gold chain on Golowin's neighbour, of which they took possession with a laugh,) the guide sprang on the upper seat, whipped the horses, and drove full speed through the dark streets of Moscow. The Cossack trotted quietly behind.

The sledge left Moscow by one of the eastern barriers. It was the end of September, when day dawns about seven o'clock. The wide plains towards the east were already deeply covered with snow, and an early winter threatened the country. The sky was black with clouds, which were driven fast before the wind, and only occasionally allowing a clear beam of the declining moon to break through their rifts.

"Who are you?" said Golowin to his neighbour, who had till now sat silent and weeping.

"I am called Kertsch. And who are you, my companion in trouble?"

"My name is —"

He could not pronounce it, for the Cossack was already beside him, and gave him such severe strokes with the knout that he sank back almost fainting. When the rider had also struck poor Kertsch as cruelly, he said, "Beware that you do not speak a word, or I will send a bullet through your heads"—a threat which they could easily credit from the treatment they had already experienced.

After about two hours, during which the horses continued almost uninterruptedly at full speed, (a constancy of which only Russian horses are capable,) the road led through a village. The sledge stopped before a house which was prepared as a kind of post station. They knocked; without any delay another driver appeared, with a relay of three horses: another Cossack rode sleepily out of the gate, and received a writing; the former military leader of the prisoners gave him the necessary directions in a low tone, and again they proceeded, as fast as the horses could run in the cold midnight. The next stage lasted but an hour and a half, for the leader was yet more rapid than the Moscow man. They next reached a large solitary guard-house, in the midst of a dark wide-spreading wood, where a similar change was performed; and without the least delay the journey was continued.

The wind abated as day broke, but it began to snow thickly. The unhappy prisoners were thus robbed of the only comfort of a clear prospect, for the flakes fell so thick that they could scarcely see the fir and pine-trees on either side of the broad road.

At the next guard-house the Cossack produced the paper which had been given him. Our poor friends now received a basin of porridge each, and a tumbler of schnaps, for their morning meal, which they were allowed to eat with unbound hands, each sitting in a corner of the guard-room, apart from one another. Kertsch could eat nothing from sorrow; but Golowin compelled himself to eat what they gave him; for he was wise enough to consider he should have nothing warm again before noon. It was so; the journey continued

at full speed beneath constant snow storms, sometimes through extensive woods, sometimes over wide-spread plains, with sparsely scattered villages, till about two o'clock. Kertsch suffered much from hunger and cold, while Golowin, who had eaten and drunk the brandy, bore the discomfort of the weather more easily.

When the last guard-house was reached, they had left behind six stations, and, according to measurement, were between fifty and sixty miles* from the capital. The two prisoners were now unbound, and the officer in command of the house told them that they might spend an hour in exercise after their meal. Golowin, who in spite of his sad condition did not lose heart, needed not to be told twice, but got out, went into the guard-house, and soon ate what they gave him. Then he observed with surprise the arrangements for the soldiers; these certainly did not agree with his ideas of beauty, but they presented what was necessary and useful under such circumstances. The troops had one of those great stoves which are generally used in Russia. Huge supplies of firewood lay ready; the soldiers had a cellar, a pantry, and other conveniences; the officer had a separate little room, and seemed well attended, and provisioned for a long time. In front of the guard-house there was a covered well; and on the walls of the large hall were hung the arms of the men, in prime order. On the left of the house there were stables for the horses of twenty-two Cossacks. Nothing was wanting, not even amusement, and the men seemed contented, in spite of their solitary situation, and were singing and jesting merrily.

Golowin was interrupted in his observations by an incident. The officer went up to the Cossack who had brought the prisoners, and asked him for the paper. The Cossack in vain searched every pocket; the treacherous paper had vanished. The officer instantly drew his sword and ran it through the rider! He then approached our friend, saying, "The Cossack has lost your note of delivery; who are you?"

"My name is Feodor Golowin," said the other calmly.

"What is your crime?"

"I do not know," was the answer.

"And what is your name?" The officer turned as he spoke to Golowin's fellow-prisoner.

"Nicholas Kertsch," sobbed he.

Disgusted at the unmanly behaviour of the prisoner, the officer turned from him, and said to Golowin: "Come, I will draw out a new note of delivery for you." He went forward, and Golowin followed him to his room. The officer shut the door, and began in German: "Sir, you seem to be a cultivated man, and the victim of malicious treachery."

Golowin also spoke German, and a ray of hope entered his soul. He hastened to reply, and to testify his gratitude to the officer.

"It is not in my power at present to be of use to you, but the loss of your paper is a circumstance which may have a good result. Exiles are divided into three classes: their maintenance and

* A verst, or Russian mile, is 3500 English feet, or nearly two-thirds of a mile.

treatment are, according to their class, either better or worse during the journey. I know not in which class you were included, as I received no paper; but, in the exercise of the discretion intrusted to me, I will inscribe you in the first class. Before the new note of delivery comes from Moscow, you will perhaps reach Tobolsk, or fortunately it may never more be sent."

Golowin had not words to thank the officer, who smiled kindly, and continued:—"Are you indeed aware of no cause for your banishment?"

"No."

"None? Can you remember no inadvertent expression? Have you not had intercourse with suspected persons?"

"Never."

"Cannot you recollect ever receiving or requiring letters of business from persons connected with the rebellion?"

"I know of nothing, indeed; I have not the least remembrance," persisted Golowin.

"Have you enemies? Cannot you imagine you might be denounced by some one?" inquired the well-disposed officer.

"I know of no one."

"This is strange! Are any of your relations or friends also arrested?"

"Even that I know not."

A long pause ensued, during which the officer prepared the paper. He then said: "What is your family at Moscow, and where do you live?"

Golowin told him what was necessary; the officer noted it, and added: "Sir, I am an officer; what I do for you is not customary. You shall hear from me in future."

"Tell me your name," requested Golowin.

"No, it is useless for you to know it. Now you may leave me. Avoid letting our conversation attract notice. Do not trust your fellow-traveller; cowards are generally false."

With these words the officer opened the door, let Golowin out, and our friend saw him no more. In half an hour both the prisoners were again seated in the sledge. It now contained large sheep-skins, as a protection against the stormy weather; and off it went to the distant east. The journey continued without interruption, except to change horses, and now and then, when requisite, to take food, day and night, for sixteen days. No adventure, no event of importance, happened during this period. The prisoners were well attended, and enjoyed as much freedom as they could expect on their unwilling and melancholy journey. They ventured to converse freely together, though Golowin, mindful of the warning of his unknown benefactor, observed a degree of caution. He learnt little concerning his fellow-traveller, except that he was named Kertsch, was twenty-six years old, of German parents, and had obtained a situation in St. Petersburg. The causes which had deprived him of liberty, what his situation had been—to all such questions the young man only answered by obstinate silence. He was much more communicative when St. Petersburg, and the pleasures offered to the residents of that great and splendid capital were mentioned. Golowin shuddered at the discovery that he was travelling with a man sunk in vice and

excess; the worn and aged appearance of his companion in trouble was no longer a mystery.

Kertsch had complained for some days of being unwell; and after repeated entreaties, they procured the advice of a doctor who lived in Sjunen or Fchumenji, which is reckoned the first town in Siberia. This man soon explained to the military guard that the sick man required to rest some days; a desire which was very unwillingly complied with.

In the meantime, Golowin was placed within the shelter of a walled prison; but the next night he was brought out, and obliged to proceed in a sledge, in which two prisoners were already seated, closely wrapped up from the severe cold in their fur coats. The journey was immediately resumed: a Tartar rider, armed with a lance and bow and arrows, escorted the vehicle.

As Golowin sat on the left hand of the driver, he could not in the dark see the faces of his new companions, and did not venture to turn round and speak to this entirely new company during the journey. But when the sledge stopped at the station, and the guards appeared with large burning pine torches, which are there used instead of candles or lanterns, to give light for the relay of horses, the three exiles saw one another, and what a surprise! But of this in the next chapter.

PRETTY POL.

It is very probable that the parrot, singular as it may appear, has had a greater influence upon the social habits, relations, and standing of mankind than the generality of people suppose. When the first band of adventurous travellers journeyed to the plains of India in quest of its rumoured wealth, its luxurious delicacies and appliances—when they discovered the spices, the odours, the gems, and the flora of that then new world—it is tolerably certain that they also discovered "Pretty Pol." If so, it is also certain that among the marvels of which they had to report, was that of a tribe of birds, who possessed, in addition to a gorgeousness of feathered vesture, brilliantly contrasting with the sober garb of our northern songsters, the faculty of speech, and some approach to the manners of decent people, who take food in their hands and lift it to their mouths, as decent people should. Such reports, there is little danger in asserting, met but a sceptical sort of reception among the good people of the day who lived at home at ease, and who, if they did not, as they very likely did, regard them as the romantic exaggerations of mendacious travellers, at least reserved their credence until the doubtful testimony should be corroborated by the evidence of their senses. By and by, however, Pol was transplanted from his tropical home, and came in his own person to vindicate the justice of the encomiums which had been lavished upon him.

But we suspect, as we have already hinted, that his presence in the civilised West effected much more than this; that, in fact, he fulfilled a mission of some importance. To the popular mind, the parrot must have long remained an object, if not of mystery, yet of a feeling of interest allied to

mystery. To multitudes he was the only living creature representing, in a way at all intelligible to them, that land of inexhaustible treasure and undefinable limits from whence the articles which in their eyes constituted the chief riches of the world were drawn. It follows, therefore, that it may be in a considerable degree owing to Pol that the popular mind dwelt fixedly upon the great tropical circle, as upon a region of mystery and enchantment; and that, at length, from the popular masses arose the enterprising and undaunted men who beat out a pathway through the sands of the desert to the far plains of Hindostan, and who first set the example which the Marco Polos, the Cabots, and the Columbuses of an after period so worthily followed. It is impossible to say what may have been Pol's share in exciting the spirit of discovery, because it was at a very remote period that he was first introduced to the notice of the western world. So far back as the time of the Roman emperors, we know that he was a domestic pet among the inhabitants of the imperial city; and we might show our intimacy with the classics by quoting numerous passages from them in proof of this assertion, if that were worth while—which it is not.

The parrot in his own country—and that country may be situated almost anywhere upon land lying within the torrid zone—is a member of a very declamatory republic. Naturalists class him in the order of the Scansores, from his adaptability for and cleverness in climbing: but the parrot, in all his tribes, differs in many important respects from the other families of this order. Pol, in the first place, is a practical Brahmin in diet, never destroying either reptile or insect life, but feeding cleanly and innocently from vegetables alone. Then, in the second place, though constantly engaged in getting up a "row," he is no fighter; all his excitement, and his anger too, if he have any, exhales itself in bawling and talking. If he have any combative propensities, he subdues them like a philosopher; or, when that is impossible, gives vent to them in a species of natural stump oratory which is as harmless as it is vehement. Parrots hold their conclaves all day long during the fine weather; and, if the testimony of travellers is correct, a most prodigious concert do they make when all are debating together. In the rainy season they retire into their clefts, crannies, and hiding-places in hollow trees—not being skilled in the art of building nests, in which, therefore, they have no property. What the parrot wants in a warlike spirit—if that be a want—he makes up in amiability, sociableness, and natural affection: for these tender qualities some tribes are more remarkable than others, but all are more or less characterised by them. We have known a cockatoo to be spiteful on occasions, and macaws have their whims and prejudices; but the green parrot, if not cruelly treated, is invariably gentle and docile; and all the world knows how affectionate are the little love parrots, who can exist only in pairs, who pass their lives nestling in each other's bosom, and die simultaneously by the same bolt of fate.

The reader who desires a glance at the very various family of psittacideæ, or parrots, cannot do better than visit the apartment allotted for their accommodation in the Zoological Gardens at Re-

gent's Park, where we can promise him a voluble and unanimous welcome.

Though so unlike in other respects, there is much of the disposition of the dove in the parrot; and it is worthy of note, that it feeds its young in the same way, being provided, like the dove, with a double crop, from which it disgorges the food for its progeny after it is mixed with a secretion adapted for their nourishment. We have noticed its habit of taking food in its claw, and conveying it, as it were, from hand to mouth: this odd-looking process in a bird is performed by no other member of the feathered tribe, except alone the goat-sucker; and when taken in connection with the grave and sententious mood of Pol when engaged in the serious discussion of a lump of sugar, imparts an air of absurd similarity to the human in its behaviour, which has a pretty generally admitted claim upon our sympathies.

But, after all, it is Pol's philological capabilities which are his chief passport to favour. His round fleshy tongue and complicated laryngeal apparatus endow him with imitative faculties, which, if all stories that are current concerning him be true, are wonderful indeed. It should be remembered by those who would direct his education, that Pol's instinct is imitation; and therefore, if you would have him talk, you must talk to him; otherwise, he will imitate sounds which are not articulate, and, though really a genius in his way, will pass for a dunce for lack of the power of speech. We have known one who passed his life in a carpenter's shop, imitate the planing of a deal board with such precision, that the imitated was undistinguishable from the real sound. The mewing of a cat, or the bark or whine of a dog, the sharpening of a saw, and fifty other disagreeable sounds, may be acquired, if care is not taken, by isolating him from bad examples while yet young, to habituate him to articulate sounds and to the expression of unobjectionable phrases. We have heard of parrots educated to serve a commercial purpose by puffing the wares of their proprietors; and we really see no reason why they should not answer that end, at least as well as some of the loquacious "touters" who, standing at their open show-boards from morn till night, utter the same phrases from one week's end to the other. A grey parrot, with whom we had the pleasure of an acquaintance some years ago, learned to repeat several couplets of a sentimental poem, and having been taught to pronounce them in a sentimental drawl and a kind of maudlin tone, could of course repeat them in no other way. When, after a long course of private instruction, he was brought out for exhibition, roars of laughter followed his recitations: the effect, in fact, was irresistible. But flattery spoiled him. Hearing nothing but laughter in response to his oracular utterances, he shortly began to laugh himself, and indulged so much in the exercise, that his poetical memories soon vanished altogether. Another grey specimen, whom we recollect very well, could sing the first line of "O, Nannie, wilt thou gang with me?" not only pronouncing the words, but screaming the tune with a discordantly comical kind of correctness. He was in the habit of exhibiting at a drawing-room window in a fashionable watering-place, and generally concluded his short solo with the words, rather angrily pro-

nounced, "Go on, good people—go on, good people," addressed to the crowd who stopped to hear.

Said a gentleman to a dealer, who was asking a high price for a parrot, "This is a handsome bird, but he talks very little."

"I think the more," answered Pol, immediately, and was bought up without further chaffering.

We once witnessed the performance of a parrot in Paris, who had been taught to go through a modified manual exercise with a firelock, and who concluded his performance by firing a pistol fairly charged, and shouting amid the smoke, "Vive l'empereur!" His proprietor boldly challenged all Europe to produce his fellow, and vaunted him as the only one of his race who relished the smell of powder.

Some years ago an unfortunate green parrot arrived at the house of a rather penurious landlady where we were quartered. It was a present from a relation in Calcutta, who had sent it over without a cage. Pol's new proprietor being too stingy to buy one, the poor fellow was left to wander about the house and shift as he might. He soon became a spectacle as curious as melancholy. For lack of a perch, his handsome tail was ground off by the action of the floor and the gravel as he foraged about house and garden in search of food. He next became as black as a cinder, from routing in dusty holes and corners, and grew to resemble rather a huge toad than a bird of the air. At length a child employed in the house took compassion on it; she made it a shelter from an old box, in which she stuck a perch for its accommodation, and began a course of instruction. Pol manifested extraordinary docility, and soon learned to bawl out lustily, "There's a knock at the door"—a phrase which it picked up from the constant appeals made to the child, its patron, whose business it was to open the street door to all comers. Pol's talking talent won for him a consideration that humanity alone would not have dictated; a cage was bought, and the bird was put in possession. The delight of the child found expression in childlike terms, which Polly soon caught up; and for years afterwards he was heard to repeat at intervals, "Polly got a cage! Polly got a cage!—lost his tail—poor tail!"—a complaint which he continued to reiterate long after the tail was renewed.

As a talker, the parrot has numerous rivals among birds native to Britain. The magpie, the jay, even the jackdaw, may be taught to utter intelligible sentences; but all these, and even the parrot himself, must succumb to the starling, whose imitative powers are equal to those of any other bird (save, perhaps, the American mocking-bird), and who, to the faculty of speech, adds the charm of a wild but melodious song. Anecdotes of the starling are not uncommon; everybody knows the story of Sterne's imprisoned bird, who complained unceasingly, "I can't get out—I can't get out;" and perhaps most of our readers could match that story with another as good. But we once fell in with a starling whose genius soared far above that of the bird of Sterne; and we may as well close this paper with a report of that memorable interview, in which we shall be careful to

set down nothing more than the simple fact. Thus it was.

On a day (now many years ago) when we happened to require the services of a tonsor, we stepped into a barber's shop, in a rather retired street of the town where we then dwelt. It was verging towards sunset, and the shop-window being darkened with wigs, busts, bottled hair-brushes, fronts, perfumes, sponges, etc., the contents of the apartment were not clearly visible in the comparative gloom. On our opening the door, a voice called out:—

"Gentleman wants to be shaved—Gentleman wants to be shaved!"

"No," said I, "I want my hair cut."

"Gentleman wants to be shaved!" rang the voice again.

The barber came forward from an inner room, saying, "You're wrong this time, Jacob;" and, drawing up a small blind to let in more light, revealed a starling in a cage, who, I then saw, had been the sole shopkeeper when I entered.

While I sat under the scissors, the operator commenced a conversation with the bird.

"Come, Jacob, give us a song now—come, Jacob!"

"Come and kiss me, then," said the bird, in accents almost as plain as those of a child of six or seven years—"Come and kiss me—come and kiss me—come and kiss me!"

The barber put his lips to the wires of the cage, and the bird thrust his bill between them, and a succession of loud kisses ensued, in which it was not possible to distinguish those of the human from the feathered biped, until the barber had resumed his task, when the bird continued kissing the air for some minutes.

"Come, that's kissing enough, Jacob; now give us a song. Come, 'Home, sweet home!'"

With that the barber began whistling the air; the starling took it up, and continued it alone to the concluding bar of the second strain, whistling it with perfect accuracy up to that point, and then breaking into its own wild natural song.

"Ah! Jacob, Jacob! why don't you finish your music? That's the way it is, sir—you can't get 'em to sing a whole tune; they always go off into their own wild notes before they get to the end."

Jacob now began again to insist that I wanted shaving, and would only be convinced to the contrary by more kissing. When he was quieted, I asked his owner how he had succeeded in teaching him so effectually.

"I had him young, sir," he said, "and he had nothing to unlearn when I got him. Ever since he has been my only companion, except when customers come in, from morning to night. I sit by him nearly all day, perhaps weaving a wig, or doing some other quiet job, and I talk to him, and he talks to me. Of course I don't teach him one thing before he has learned another; and if I was to try to teach him too much, perhaps he wouldn't learn anything. He can talk a great deal more than you have yet heard, and he'll speak again presently."

Of this I had some doubts, as the bird was then busy feeding; but no sooner was the cloth removed from my neck, and I rose from my seat, than up started Jacob to his perch, and began

shouting with the whole force of his little lungs:—

"Gentleman, pay your money—Gentleman, pay your money—Gentleman, pay your money!" and he continued to vociferate this delicate reminder long after the money was paid—as long indeed as I continued within hearing.

THE WRITINGS OF EMERSON.

DID men regard the godlike gift of thought aright, they would know that there are impenetrable glooms which its light can never pierce, and where man's only safety is to retrace his steps: it is a mysterious lamp which sheds no light upon itself. But in every age men have sought to grasp and analyse this sacred fire. In vain: its ethereal beams elude us, and man is fain to return to his wonted paths, astounded at his own nature; at once baffled by the greatness of his desires and the littleness of his powers.

What know we of the essential nature of the human mind more than Zeno, or Plato, or Aristotle? What can man ever know of its essence, more than Locke, or Kant, or Schelling? If his life be but one prolonged endeavour to solve the mystery of his own being, he dies before its solution. "No power of genius," says one who delighted in such speculations, "has ever yet had the smallest success in explaining existence."

But still the inquiry goes on, and every age has its great thinkers and dreamers, who can but tell us the same tale of fruitless research: they have not, "by searching, found out God," nor the godlike powers within them. And doubtless it is well that thus it should be. The failure of one is the gain of many, and man learns a valuable lesson from the records of the wanderings of his fellow-man in the devious paths of speculative philosophy.

Let us examine the writings of one who professes to be one of the most earnest thinkers of the present age—one who avows himself ever to be a seeker of the true and the beautiful, wherever he believes it to be, and at whatever cost. The work by which he is here best known is his "Representative Men." He has also written the "Memoirs of Margaret Fuller;" "Impressions of England;" several orations delivered at the colleges and literary societies of America, a volume of poems—small in compass, but claiming to be great in purpose—some dozen essays, etc., and a few lectures and criticisms, which are better known in the New than in the Old World. On opening any of his books, the most careless reader will be struck with his style: it is not the smooth, ornate, rounded style of the hack writer, nor has it even the ordinary polish of every-day prose: it is rugged, isolated, and forceful, entirely a style *sui generis*. He is not, as Bulwer says Leibnitz is, an author whom it is easy to quote without having read. He at once places himself face to face with the reader, and enounces what he himself has felt and thought. As we read on, we are startled by the brilliancy of the ideas, the fanciful contortions of old ideas, and the enunciation of new. He seems to tread above all things the well-worn highways of common sense, and whenever he has occasion to approach

them, he flies off at a tangent into the regions of cloudland. But throughout his works we occasionally see passages of honest, sober thought, which show us that he could write more like a thinker and less like a dreamer, if he would. But sober truth is too commonplace for Emerson: he is not satisfied with a fact: he would shatter it to fragments, that he may see what it is made of; a sentiment, a passion, is not enough for him; he affects to analyse the sentiment; he would "tear the passion to tatters."

His literary style somewhat reminds us of that of Thomas Carlyle, though it has even more rugged energy than his; but we object to it as fragmentary and detached: there is no continuity, no system. He begins in the middle and ends nowhere: he proposes a subject and writes on something else: hence almost any one of the titles of the essays might head any one of the essays themselves, and any one of the said essays could be as well understood without any title at all. His sentences do not dovetail into one another; some read like a bad translation, and others seem to have fallen together hap-hazard, while the short ones remind us of Horace's "*Brevi esse laboro, obscurus fio*."

Emerson's matter is not quite so original as his manner. Many of his ideas are old enough, but they are clothed in new dresses, often brilliant, but always *outré*. He is evidently a great reader, and perhaps an unconscious borrower. Many of his sentiments are as old as philosophy itself. Plato and Aristotle, Shakspeare and Milton, Sir Philip Sidney and Bishop Berkeley, have all enunciated kindred thoughts; but Emerson exaggerates them: he carries an idea to its full limit, and sometimes oversteps the narrow boundary between the sublime and the ridiculous (e.g. our 4th extract). As fair specimens of his style, we commend the following to the reader, hoping he may have better success in determining the meaning, and keeping it when he thinks he has it, than we have had.

1. "A link was wanting between two craving parts of nature, and man was hurried into being as the bridge over that yawning need, the mediator between two else unmarriageable facts. His two parents held each of one of the wants, and the union of foreign constitutions in him enables him to do what the assembled human race could not have sufficed to do."—*Method of Nature*.

2. "Nature is the memory of the mind. That which once existed in intellect as pure law has now taken body as nature. It existed already in the mind in solution; now it has been precipitated, and the bright sediment is the world."—*Id.*

3. "Every star in heaven is discontented and insatiable. Gravitation and chemistry cannot content them. Every man who comes into the world they seek to fascinate and possess, to pass into his mind; for they desire to republish themselves in a more delicate world than that they occupy."—*Id.*

4. "Let the great soul incarnated in some woman's form, in some Dolly or Joan, go out to service, and sweep chambers, scour floors, and its effulgent day-beams cannot be muffled or hid, but to swap and scour will instantly appear supreme and beautiful actions, the top and radiance of human life, and all people will get mops and brooms, until, lo, suddenly the great soul has enshrined itself in some other form, and done some other deed, and that is now the flower and head of all living nature."—*Spiritual Laws*.

5. "Romeo, if dead, should be cut up into little stars, to make the heavens fine."—*Id.*

On these passages (fair sample of the bulk) we will but apply two little aphorisms from Emerson

himself: he says, "To be simple is to be great;" he tells us moreover, "To be great is to be misunderstood." We presume, therefore, that, wishing to be understood, he was determined not to be simple. He seems to take delight in opposing himself on common subjects to common-sense views of life; e.g. he says, "Books are for the scholar's idle times." Reader, what say you? He says, "Fear always springs from ignorance." We thought fear frequently sprung from knowledge: an infant, who is ignorance itself, has no fear. He tells us, "It is as easy to be great as to be small." Try it! "Society never advances." How consolatory for the future! Clio, muse of history, what is your verdict?

The reader will observe how unqualified are the statements, and how oracularly he speaks. A multitude of passages might be quoted equally opposed to common ideas of what is right and true: some of his paradoxes, enigmas, and anomalies may be explained away, but the majority defy the ordinary mind. It is in vain to treat him as a commentator upon himself; for when we look for explanations we find contradictions. Consistency he confessedly despises. In ethics he is a perfectionist, and he would exact an ideal perfection from all around him. Not that he expects it, but his theory demands it. He is a social reformer, at least so far as scorn and contempt of everything mean, little, or paltry, will reform us. He is really, at times, withering in his criticisms upon the follies and weaknesses of our nature, and in many, his ideal aspirations after the beautiful and true, may induce corresponding imaginings; but the real amount of practical good his pen will ever do is infinitesimal. His ideal perfectionism is not for human nature at all; for the selfish, ever-raging "battle of life," it is wholly unsuited. His transcendentalism, after all, is but an "airy nothing."

His religious theory—so far as he seems able to explain it—is that of pantheism—a God everywhere, which, as Coleridge says, is a God nowhere. His Deity is impersonal, pervading all nature, existing in all men: it seems synonymous with what he calls the over-soul; nature is God; man is God—a God to himself.

This, we need hardly say, is but ancient heathenism reproduced. The luminary and oracle of the school of progress in our own day, turns back to and seeks alliance with the Bhuddism of the Hindoo! So much for man's boasted wisdom!

We get, says a talented writer, at the secret source of all this, when we come to observe what inferences are drawn, what practical teachings are based upon it. Personal accountability is discarded; good and evil are confounded; the human conscience is exhorted to calm its terrors, and rest satisfied with the assurance that as man is a God unto himself, he has none but himself to fear. Miserable delusion!

These dogmas are, in these times, sifted into the minds of the young especially, through a great variety of mediums. They appeal in their minds to the same class of motives as that which has given birth to them. Pleasing to the natural heart, attractive to those who are naturally of a dreamy, speculative turn, commended by the authority of some who are regarded as great

names in literature, they work their way amongst us, secretly, insidiously, and to a greater extent than many would be ready to believe. We submit, in conclusion, the question: Whether all the avenues of popular influence ought not to be much more carefully guarded than they are; whether the teachers of truth are doing all their duty, in guarding their charge from the subtle approaches of such error?

THE WATERS OF LIFE.

O THIS life, 'tis pleasant sailing,
When the silent waters sleep,
And no adverse winds prevailing,
We are drifting to the deep.

Floating on 'mid isles of pleasure,
Violet-margined to the seas;
Isles where, lulled to softest measure,
Doze the helpless sons of ease.

While a golden sunset glowing,
Throws a glory o'er the tide,
Rainbow hues of light bestowing
Scarce a shadow as we glide:

For an instant darkening only,
Shoots some little petrel's wing;
For an instant, weird-like, lonely,
Warning voices round us sing:—

"Oh awake, ye idle dreamers,
Seize the helm and ply the oar;
See yon storm-ship's lurid streamers;
Hear the breakers on the shore!"

All is changed, though but a minute;
On yon headland wild and drear
Frowns a ruined fortress; in it,
Hark! what wailings smite the ear.

There the strong man binds the lowly,
There the false one stoops to rise;
There God's name, on lips unholy,
Profaned, draws tears from angels' eyes.

Gone, the mocking bright ideal—
All is warfare, riot, rattle;
None are kings but victors real,
Crowned upon some field of battle.

Life, O life, seems lengthen'd dying;
Warp and woof how madly thrown;
Want and labour, fiercely plying,
Stamp the alternate treddles down.

Yet, amid the darkness stealing,
Fall some gleams of beauty—heaven
Some fond Mary, lowly kneeling,
Hails the light, and is forgiven.

Trustful, with devotion tender
And crossed arms, stands gentle Ruth;
Upon her brow, with sweet mild splendour,
Shines Faith, the holiest star of Truth:

Smiles, soft as childhood's, glow to cheer us;
Tears, pure as hers, through suffering tried,
Who humbly said, "Hadst thou been near us,
Dear Lord! my brother had not died."

Then, heart, be firm—dear Faith be warm,
And shield us, Lord! from thought of ill;
Be thou our pilot through the storm,
Hail us, and bid the sea be still.

J. BRENT.

Reasonable Thoughts for the New Year.

"REDEEMING the time." Such is the short but emphatic warning of Scripture. Queen Elizabeth, when dying, is said to have been willing to part with her empire for another hour; but it was too late to complete the bargain. Time was of more value than a kingdom; her armies, fleets, stores of merchandise, home and foreign possessions, all the broad domains she owned and had striven so hard to enlarge, were not able to purchase a single grain of the time that was running down the sand-glass of the meanest subject in her realm. Dr. Johnson also, when dying, preached unconsciously a sermon on redeeming the time. His physicians, anxious to avoid giving him pain, hesitated to perform an operation which could only protract his existence a few hours longer, amid severe suffering. "Cut deep," he said; "you think only of avoiding to give me pain, when it is life that I want." He was willing to buy back time, and give in exchange ease and health—but the opportunity for concluding the transaction was over. He had had warnings of the value of time before. On the dial-plate of his watch, we are informed, were engraven (in Greek) the words, "The night cometh, when no man can work."

Often, in the daily business of life, practical illustrations of this text may be noticed. Observe on some railroad what takes place when the train has lingered behind its appointed hour. The conductor knows that he must, under a penalty, reach the next station by a certain minute. The engine throbs convulsively; the sparks fly; station after station is passed with electric rapidity; passengers look out of the windows in alarm. What is the cause? He is "redeeming the time." The importance of this duty is strikingly seen also in secular matters, when some work must be done by a given period, or left undone altogether. How anxiously did the engineer and his staff labour at that stupendous structure, the Menai Tubular Bridge, during the spring tide, in which alone the attempt could be made of raising that enormous mass of iron to its proper position! How, too, some years ago, did the workmen toil at Dundrum Bay to catch the tide, which was either to float the "Great Britain," or leave it stranded till another winter. Moments were precious then; each one of them had its work to do. All were gathered up like gold-dust; time was redeemed, indeed. A friend of ours, having important business which required his presence in America by a certain day, was tempted, after securing his passage in the packet, to indulge in a short run to the Continent during the fortnight that preceded the sailing of the vessel. To his alarm, he found, in returning, that he had miscalculated the time, and he had, with an anxious and palpitating heart, to travel night and day. He reached the packet before it sailed. Never, however, had he had so thrillingly impressed upon him the lesson of "redeeming the time" as on that occasion. Hour after hour was counted, and instead of surveying with gratification specimens of splendid scenery, a sweeter prospect than the snowy summit of Mount Blanc was the black funnel of the steamer, announcing that it had not taken its departure. "The fear of losing my passage made me think," he said, "what it would be to awake in eternity and find I had lost my soul."

In our present use of clocks and watches we miss something of the striking lessons which our fathers had when the sand-glass was used as their chronometer. There is much about this antiquated emblem to impress the imagination. How goodly seems the store of sand in the upper department of the glass, when it first begins to run. So the year appears at its opening to many a thoughtless spendthrift of time. It is rich in many days; one stolen from them for folly will never be missed. After a little comes what we may call the manhood of the glass; the sand is half expired. Yet a little longer, and its old age draws on; the mass of sand, once a goodly heap, is now diminished to a few grains. The last of them comes—it glides—it falls—and the moral of life is told. Sand-glasses for domestic use seldom contain, now-a-days, more dust than would last a few minutes. Once, however, they were made to embrace a larger portion of time. We have sometimes thought, could a glass be imagined large

enough to hold the sands of a man's whole life, and could there be shown, below in separate departments, the way in which each portion of the mass that ran down had been employed, how startled should we be with the spectacle. What mountains would be found spent in sin! What hills in vain pleasures! What tiny portions in the real service of God, and in devotion to the things of eternity!

In Anglo-Saxon periods, as is well known, time was measured by candles, each having balls of brass inserted at equal distances, which fell down into a brazen vessel with a loud noise when the wax melted. Life's candle is a simile employed by the poet, and it expresses not inaptly an existence continually wasting away. A pious relative of the writer of this paper, calling once upon a lady who was an invalid, found her more than usually thoughtful. After some inquiry as to the cause, she explained to her friend that, falling asleep, she seemed, in a dream, to awake and to find the room filled with a blaze of light proceeding from a number of candles. Some were tall and burned clear, others were half consumed, while some flickered in the socket. On looking closer, each candle had the name of a friend inscribed upon it. "I looked for yours," she added; "it seemed long and bright. My own, however, appeared fast hastening to its close." A diseased imagination had, perhaps, occasioned this dream. We quote it for the illustration which it affords of our subject, and not in support of any theory. Life's taper with you, dear reader, still burns. Whether it be short or long is known infallibly only to God. Be it yours, while it lasts, to seek and love the Saviour. "If a master," says an old divine, "should set a light upon a candlestick, and give his servant food and time, and all things convenient wherewith to work, yet when he comes to see if his task be finished, he finds that the meat is wasted, the time is ended, the candle to the very socket burned, and little or nothing of the work furthered, how would such a servant excuse himself to his master? And is it not so with many of you? God hath given you meat, drink, and time; he hath given you candle, fire, and matter; but what have you done? Is not the lamp of your life almost consumed, and yet you have not finished the work which was given you to do—the work of laying out every talent to his glory—believing with the heart in the Son of God?"

The Roman monarch must have been startled when the sybil came and successively presented her continually diminishing store of books, demanding for the stock when small the same price she had asked when it was large. The king, so runs the legend, was glad to buy the books, and was blamed for having been so long about it, and let the best portion of them pass irrevocably away. Wisdom thus, like a merchant, presents her wares to each one of us, and cries, "Buy back the time!" Its store is constantly lessening, yet how few heed her voice. Rich men redeem estates which they had lost by improvidence; the poor man redeems the pledge he had left with the pawnbroker; but seldom do any think of redeeming their time. With many, the stock of the article on hand seems only too large. The question is, not how to buy more of it, but how to dispose of what lies already like a drug in the market. Dreadful terms, used in sport, show how little the value of time is understood by men of the world. It is called "the enemy;" to "kill it" is thought laudable. New modes of murdering it by dissipation and amusement are invented. Billiards, cards, theatres, novels, are but the instruments with which the assassination of it is effected. John Foster was not far wrong, when he said to a lady who had capacity for more useful employment, but who was engrossed with some worsted work, in which there was a large proportion of scarlet, that her knitting was red with the blood of murdered time.

Time, the Christian sees, must be redeemed, because it possesses opportunities for glorifying God which will never again present themselves. In heaven there will be no sin to strive against—no sick to visit—no mourners to comfort—no ignorant to instruct—no heathen to convert. Now or never must the Christian occupy with his talent in these works. Oh, how should this consideration warm the zeal of those who bear the name of Christ!